## Was there a particular way of knowing that was most important in the decision about whether Data was the property of the star fleet? If so why or why not?

This essay is based on an episode from Star Trek. In this episode an important decision had to be made on whether Data, who is an android, is property of the star fleet or not. There are multiple ways of knowing that are used in the trial; personally I thought that emotion was the key WOK.

Firstly the argument Riker puts up to hand over Data to the star fleet was mainly based on sense perception. He exposes how Data is just a robot by taking off his hand, he also tells Data to bend a bar of some kind of high strength steel, and finally Riker switches Data off completely. Riker then goes on to say that Pinocchio’s strings have been cut. This also uses reason as well as sense perception a way of knowing. By taking off Data’s hand which then reveals all his wires that he is made up of and then by pressing a button which completely shuts Data down really highlights how un-human Data is. By doing this it shows the judge that he is just a robot that had been created by a human being. It stops the judge treating Data like a human and makes Data seem less unique.

Language is also an important Way of knowing in the decision of who Data belongs to. Data was referred to as ‘it’ rather than ‘he’ throughout again to de-humanize Data further. It makes Data seem more of a object or a man made creation which again makes it easier to allow Data to be handed over to the Star fleet so that he can just be dismantled and copied again and again.

After all this Picard thought that there was no chance in stopping Data from being handed over to the star fleet. After a bit of advice from a woman he then brings in emotion as a way of knowing. He brings up the concern of how the replication of Data may result in masses of Data’s which will end up being treated like slaves. Just the way humans will treat them would be morally and ethically wrong.

Picard goes on to show that Data has the same characteristics as a human does. He shows that Data has emotions and is more than just a robot. Picard asks data about the gifts that he had been given, data responds by saying that they meant something to him and it showed friendship, similarly to the medals Data had been given; he showed that they actually meant something to him. Picard also pulls out a statue that had been given to him by another character called Tasha. Data is asked why he has it and replies by telling Picard that he and Tasha were intimate. Picard also mentions the characteristics of a human: Intelligence, self-awareness and consciousness. He then asks the research guy whether Data has all these traits and the answer to them is yes he does. By showing how similar Data is to a human and by showing that he has emotions and feelings makes it seem wrong for him just to be handed over to the star fleet to be changed and copied. Also the language used by the research guy to address Data changes from ‘It’ to ‘He’ after this.

I think that emotion was the most influential way of knowing as it showed that Data was more than just a robot that looked like a human. Also everyone cared about Data he had created friend-ship with everyone which made it harder for them to let Data be taken away; he was treated as a normal human friend.